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OF MUCH LOVE AND SOME KNOWLEDGE OF BOOKS

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OF MUCH LOVE AND SOME KNOWLEDGE OF BOOKS

BY

HENRY EDUARD LEGLER

The ornamental title-page and other decorations in this book have been engraved from designs by Frederick William Gookin

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LET ME LOVE THE INSIDES OF BOOKS WITH DR. JOHNSON AND HAVE RESPECT UNTO THEIR OUTSIDES WITH DAVID GARRICK.

—DeWitt Miller's bookplate inscription.

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OF MUCH LOVE AND SOME KNOWLEDGE OF BOOKS

I

Let it be understood at the very outset that this is to be no listing of books in any fashion as guides for reading or for study; no cataloguing of volumes warranted to comprise the hundred best books, nor a thousand; no measurement of shelf-space to contain selected works that no gentleman's library should be without. One may be pardoned for choosing his own titles, whether they be a baker's dozen or overrun the allotted limits of a measured shelf. If one gives in the choosing no evidence of good taste, as determined by experts in culture, at any rate one exercises the privilege of declaring for himself what tastes good.

> We get no good
> By being ungenerous, even to a book,
> And calculating profits . . . so much help
> By so much reading. It is rather when
> We gloriously forget ourselves and plunge
> Soul-forward, headlong, into a book profound,
> Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—
> 'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

Books naturally fall into three classes, as Prof. Woodberry points out: those that are outlived,

20078

because the experience they contain and address is shallow or transitory; those that are arrived at late because the experience involved is mature; and those, the greatest, which give something to the youngest and have something left to give to the oldest, which keep pace with life itself and like life disclose themselves more profoundly, intimately, and in expanding values with familiarity.

"The secret of appreciation," he says, "is to share the passion for life that literature itself exemplifies and contains; out of real experience, the best that one can have, to possess oneself of that imaginary experience which is the stuff of larger life and the place of the ideal expansion of the soul, the gateway to which is art in all forms and primarily literature; to avail oneself of that for pleasure and wisdom and fulness of life. It is those minds which are thus experienced that alone come to be on the level of the greatest works and to absorb their life; but the way is by a gradual ascent, by natural growth, by maintaining a vital relation with what is read. So long as the bond between author and reader is a living bond, appreciation is secure.

"The act of reading is a blending of two souls, nor is it seldom that the reader brings the best part, vivifying his author with his own memory and aspiration and imparting a flame to the words from his own soul. The appreciation of literature is thus by no means a simple matter; it is not the ability to read, nor even a canon of criticism

and rules of admiration and censure that are required; but a live soul, full of curiosity and interest in life, sensitive to impressions, acute and subtle in reception, prompt to complete a suggestion, and always ready with the light of its own life to serve harmonious and enhancing environment of scenes of love or tragedy. That reader does best who in his use of literature insists on the presence of this immediate appeal to himself in the books he reads. If the book does not have this effect with him, if it does not co-operate with his own taste and interest, it may be the best of books for others, but it is not for him—at least it is not yet for him."

There are books of facts, representing the literature of information; there are also books of imagination, representing the literature of power in the building of personality and character.

Concerning the first type of books, there must be knowledge, but only an erratic fancy could lavish love upon them. Of the other, knowledge but presupposes love. Now love of books may be, as it is in human relationship which books symbolize, of three kinds: physical, intellectual, and emotional. The one form creates the bibliographe; the next too often produces the bibliotaphe; the other begets the unbalanced bibliomaniac. In a merging of the three elements of book love is found that finer spirit summed up in the term bibliophile. Abbé Rive, librarian of the Duke de Vallière, in his lexicon of the booklover described the bibliophile as "a lover of books, the only one of the class who appears to

read them for his own pleasure," while a later biblio-lexicographer has expanded this definition thus: "The Simon-Pure lover of books, God bless him! Much rarer he than people think him to be. Bibliophile is a title which belongs to those who seek books for themselves alone, hurried into no excesses of the passion of the bibliomaniac, and free from the selfish and miserly cupidity of the bibliotaphe."

Reference again to Abbé Rive's biblio-lexicon, and Halkett Lord's biblio-dictionary, and George H. Ellwanger's little list of similar definitions discloses that in condensed terms the bibliotaphe is the undertaker of literature who buries his books behind locked doors; the bibliographe is he who deems a coldly scientific collation or description of books his chief duty toward them; the bibliomaniac is tersely identified by the Germans as a Bücher-narr, or book-fool. He is, to refer to Abbé Rive again, the indiscriminate accumulator, cock-brained and purse-heavy. He is learned only in titles, dates, and editions, and a connoisseur of colophons. Of what lies between the first and final pages, he careth naught, save perhaps an illustration or an error of typography. Him Sebastian Brant full four hundred years ago sent on a wild-goose voyage in his delectable Ship of Fools. "I am the first foole of all the whole navy," Brant caused him to say, and ever since it can be read of the bookworm in German, Latin and in English, and in Suabian dialect, too, what sort of fool he is:

Still am I besy bokes assemblynge
For to haue plenty it is a pleasaunt thynge
In my conceyt and to haue them ay in honde—
But what they mean do I nat vnderstonde.

Lo in lyke wyse of bokys I haue store
But fewe I rede, and fewer understonde.
I folowe not theyr doctryne nor theyr lore—
It is ynoughe to bere a boke in hande,
It were to moche to be in suche a bande
For to be bounde to loke within the boke—
I am content on the fayre couerynge to loke.

Each of the latter three types, therefore, possesses one, and but one, of three otherwise excellent qualities, each of which is rendered ludicrous or odious only in being detached from the others and becoming over-accentuated. Refined and tempered by association, these qualities become the essence of that subtle love and knowledge of books which yield the Seven Joys of Reading. And the Seven Joys of Reading are these:*

The first joy is the Joy of Familiarity,
The second joy is the Joy of Surprise,
The third joy is the Joy of Sympathy,
The fourth joy is the Joy of Appreciation,
The fifth joy is the Joy of Expansion,
The sixth joy is the Joy of Shock,
The last of the seven is the Joy of Revelation.

The last Joy? Nay, peradventure, not the last. There remain ninety-and-nine.

*Plummer, Mary W. The Seven Joys of Reading.

II

Of the love of books, it may be reiterated, there are three: Physical, intellectual, and emotional. To have interest in the make-up of a book for bibliographical descriptive purposes only is book-love in counterfeit guise. Dr. Thomas Frognall Dibdin was perhaps the pattern whose replicas, alas, may be found in too many of our libraries to-day. In his sumptuously printed volumes miles upon miles of running type give with dull minuteness the typographical vagaries of the volumes described, and the prices which they brought at auction. The Dibdinite delights in inverted letters, in wrong pagination, in errors in spelling. To him it is a greater pleasure to discover a typographical eccentricity than a living bit of literature. He delights in the curious misspellings and bibliographic mistakes which have given flavor to certain editions of the Bible such as the Breeches Bible, the Bug Bible, the Wicked Bible, the Vinegar Bible, the Standing Fishes Bible, the Ears-to-Ear Bible, the Wife-Hater Bible, and many others. This is the measure of his love of books.

Rightly pursued, however, the study of the physical attributes of a book is not ignoble. Its format, its binding, its proportion of text and margin, its type, its title-page and colophon if it have one, its illustrations and decorations and the processes which have produced them, the texture of the paper, the

chapter headings, and a score of other things distinctive in a book, well repay most careful study. And this study must embrace not only those considerations individually, but their relation to each other, for in combination they mar a book or render it an object of beauty and nobility, just as personal qualities make for man's character and shape his life.

Browsing at random among one's books, as the mood sometimes impels, one finds between covers something that ordinarily escapes attention—something unimportant, maybe, but conveying the little intimate touch that gives the volume its value to the possessor. For books have their little secrets, too, that are not for the general reader, who could not understand; that are reserved for those whose sympathetic ear is attuned to hear the wee whisper, and who can cherish the little confidences as those of a friend. It may be that a mere signature will tell a long, long story as does the thumb mark in that volume of Keats which was found in Shelley's coat pocket when his body was washed upon the beach. It may be a scrawl on the margin, or where the printed footnote belongs, or where the old master printers were wont to put the colophon. And it may be a mere affectation of phrase, in the printed text, or a reference to scene or circumstance that to him who knows means much, but to any other gives no hint of personal allusion. For the one the book is the draught that quenches thirst; for the other it is the nectar whose exquisite flavor lingers in the taste.

III

For most readers the introduction is the part to remain unread, and the dedication to be unnoted. And yet the dedicatory page may be more interesting than all the pages that follow. It is here that the author permits the reader a glimpse of himself, of his friendships, of his intimate thoughts. This, of course, was not always so; in one period of bookmaking, what should have been the "spontaneous expression of an author's love" became perverted into the fulsome praise of a wealthy patron "that thrift might follow fawning." Into the dedication of the modern book, nothing of sordid commercialism enters; it is the one particular personal touch which the author allows himself. The most interesting dedications, as they are frequently the most graceful in form and genuine in tone, are those addressed to mother, wife or sweetheart. A random journey along the bookshelves will disclose this fact. They are not all of them in modern books. Perhaps the example of an earlier century that comes most readily to mind is Sir Philip Sidney's famous "Arcadia," whose quaint and loving dedication has caused it to be known as the "Countess of Pembroke's 'Arcadia.'" In a volume published in 1772, Richard Steele's dedication to his wife reads:

I owe to you that for my sake you have overlooked the prospect of living in pomp and plenty, and I have not

been circumspect enough to preserve you from care and sorrow.

Poor Dick Steele! He well earned the definition applied to him as a man "who multiplied troubles as few men will, and bore them better than most men can."

Of modern dedications, William Ernest Henley's to his wife in that last thin sheaf of verse published before his death may well come first. Henley's was a tempestuous spirit, but his mood was rarely tender when he wrote this:

TO MY WIFE

Take, dear, my little sheaf of songs,
  For, old and new,
All that is good in them belongs
  Only to you.

And singing as when always young,
  They will recall
Those others, lived but left unsung—
  The best of all.

Mention of Henley inevitably recalls Robert Louis Stevenson. With characteristic fervor and fire, the wizard of words wrote:

Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight,
The Great Artificer
Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire;
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench, or evil stir,
The Mighty Master gave to her.

Teacher, tender comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart-whole and soul-free,
The August Father
Gave to me.

When Stevenson wrote "Weir of Hermiston," it was his wife to whom he dedicated what was destined to remain a fragment:

I saw rain falling and the rainbow drawn
On Lammermuir. Hearkening I heard again
In my precipitous city beaten bells
Winnow the keen sea wind. And here afar,
Intent on my own race and place, I wrote.
Take thou the writing: thine it is. For who
Burnished the sword, blew on the drowsy coal,
Held still the target higher, chary of praise
And prodigal of counsel—who but thou?
So now, in the end, if this the least be good,
If any deed be done, if any fire
Burn in the imperfect page, the praise be thine.

Alfred Tennyson dedicated two of his books to his wife, issued more than a quarter of a century apart. This dedication to Mrs. Tennyson was first printed in the Enoch Arden volume of 1864:

A DEDICATION

Dear, near and true—no truer Time himself
Can prove you, though he make you evermore
Dearer and nearer.

His last volume bears the second dedication. It was written shortly prior to his death in 1892:

I thought to myself I would offer this book to you,
This and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,
With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue heaven,
And a fancy as Summer new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the heather.

Mary Olcott is the author of the following felicitous dedication:

I hide within my book till eyes
Which draw my own shall look and read;
Others may look, yet give no heed;
The printed word has no surprise
For alien eyes.

Whoever reads, save only one,
May read. But one alone shall find
The impress of the hidden mind,
Uttering speech where speech is none
For but the one.

The estrangement of Elizabeth Barrett and her father when she married Robert Browning is one of the sad chapters of literary history. The pathos of this dedicatory preface appears the greater when it is recalled that her father refused to be reconciled to his daughter for marrying in opposition to his wishes. This is the dedication:

To My Father: When your eyes fall upon this page of dedication, and you start to see to whom it is inscribed, your first thought will be of the time far off when I was a child and wrote verses, and when I dedicated them to you, who were my public and my critic. Of all that such a recollection implies of saddest and sweetest to both of us, it would become neither of us to speak before the world; nor would it be possible for us to speak of it to one another with voices that did not falter. Enough, that what is in my heart when I write thus, will be fully known to yours. . . . Somewhat more faint-hearted than I used to be, it is my fancy thus to seem to return to a visible dependence on you, as if indeed I were a child again; to conjure your beloved image between myself and the public, so as to be sure of one smile,—and to satisfy my heart while I sanctify my ambition, by associating with the great pursuit of my life its tenderest and holiest affection.

No name is given by Pierre Loti on the dedicatory page of "From Lands of Exile:"

I dedicate this to the memory of a noble and exquisite woman, whose never-to-be-forgotten image rises before me strangely vivid whenever I have time to think. These notes from the faraway Yellow Land were originally written for her alone. I used to send them to her out of the distance as a sort of chat to amuse her during the long, weary months while she was slowly fading out of life, slowly and with a serene smile.

In the extraordinary love-story that resulted in the marriage of Honoré de Balzac and the Countess Hanska, the novelist's dedication prefixed to "Modeste Mignon" is but an incident. It was written when his fair and distant correspondent

was unknown to him by name. The rhapsodical address is truly French in verbiage and in spirit:

To a Polish Lady: Daughter of an enslaved land, angel through love, witch through fancy, child by faith, aged by experience, man in brain, woman in heart, giant by hope, mother through sorrow, poet in thy dreams, to thee belongs this book, in which thy love, thy fancy, thy experience, thy sorrow, thy hope, thy dreams are the warp through which is shot a woof less brilliant than the poetry of thy soul, whose expression when it shines upon thy countenance is to those who love thee what the characters of a lost language are to scholars.

There is a fine reserve in ~~Walter Pater's~~ Coventry Patmore's dedication to his wife, which appears in his "Angel in the House:"

This Poem
is inscribed
to
the memory of Her
By whom and for whom I became a poet.

"From the worst of poets to the best of wives" was the dedicatory phrase used by Sir Wilfred Lawson for his "Cartoons in Rhyme and Line."

These examples will suffice to indicate the interest that attaches to the unconsidered trifles of book lore.

IV

No matter how limited the collection of books, no book-lover's library is complete without at least a handful of well-thumbed volumes of verse. If he

doth possess the real spirit of the bookfellow, the individual books in this group are likely to bear a certain kinship. The collection may comprise a representation of the minor poets. There may be found together perhaps those joyful booklets issued by Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey, jointly and severally, including the little rare brochures privately issued. Or, perchance, there may be fraternizing the different editions of the myriad publications bearing the name of the Persian Tent-dweller. Perhaps some of the books may suggest a legacy from the troubadours, even though in modern guise. Such grouping, while evidence of special affection, if not of taste, in either case conveys an interest which no serried row of jostling uncongenial books upon a shelf can ever have.

In Provence, land of idyllic sunny skies and languorous romance, "land of the nightingale and rose;" in Provence, where in the centuries agone troubadours sang their lays and jongleurs recited their verse; there first grew into fullness the curious forms of versification whose modern equivalents are known as ballades, triolets, virelais and villanelles. For nine centuries, the wandering minstrels of the days of chivalry have been dust; their epitaphs are brief references to be found in histories of European literature.

A quarter-century ago Algernon Swinburne's studies in old French literature prompted him to essay in English garb what had been done so felicitously in that Romance dialect peculiar to Southern France. The facile pen of Andrew Lang soon made

these verse-forms popular. Austin Dobson, Edmund Gosse, Richard Le Gallienne, W. E. Henley and others of the modern school of English poets caught their enthusiasm. On this continent they were joined by Frank Dempster Sherman, Clinton Scollard, Brander Matthews and H. C. Bunner. Their contributions in these archaic measures and the interest inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson and John Payne in the careers of Master François Villon and his kindred Gallic spirits have again made current coin the medium used by these swaggering vagabonds of literature who were the legatees of the old troubadours.

Certainly, there is something fascinating in these dainty bits of fragile rhyme, apparently so carelessly free, and yet when analyzed, so rigorously fettered by rules that may not be ignored. They lend themselves in a remarkable degree to that harmonious combination that blends sound and meaning in such manner that to separate is to destroy both. These measures are essentially the language of poets, and they have inspired many morceaux descriptive of their own quaint structure. One of the best examples of this character is Algernon Charles Swinburne's

THE ROUNDEL

A Roundel is wrought as a ring or a starbright sphere,
With craft of delight and with cunning of sound unsought,
That the heart of the hearer may smile if to pleasure his ear
A roundel is wrought:

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of aught—
Love, laughter, or mourning—remembrance of rapture
or fear—
That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the hearts in us
hear—
Pause answers to pause, and again the same strain caught,
So moves the device whence, round as a pearl or tear,
A roundel is wrought.

Mr. Clinton Scollard prefers the ballade, with its inevitable envoy addressed to Prince, or other dignitary to whom custom has made it necessary to dedicate the verses:

FOR ME THE BLITHE BALLADE

Of all the songs that dwell
Where softest speech doth flow,
Some love the sweet roundel,
And some the bright rondeau,
With rhymes that tripping go
In mirthful measures clad;
But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe ballade!

O'er some the villanelle,
That sets the heart aglow,
Doth its enchanting spell
With lines recurring throw;
Some weighted with wasting woe,
Gay triolets make them glad;
But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe ballade!

On chant of stately swell
With measured feet and slow,

As grave as minster bell
  At vesper tolling low,
  Do some their praise bestow;
Some on sestinas sad;
  But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe ballade!

Envoy

Prince, to these songs a-row
  The Muse might endless add;
But would I choose them?—no,
  For me the blithe ballade!

Less ready in conforming to the technique of ballade-writing, Mr. Gleeson White finds the perspiration running down his face as he describes his experience:

BALLADE OF A BALLADE MONGER

You start ahead in splendid style,
  No stint of rhymes appear in view,
With many a happy thought the while—
  You dash away as though you knew
  Enough to fill the thirty-two,
Those lines, that need such careful filling,
  Yet you are lucky if you do—
For ballade-mongering is killing.

Now on your face may dawn a smile,
  To think that rhymes both neat and new,
To end your stanzas will beguile
  Your pen—till "envoy" you must brew;
  But half the poem yet is due,
And though she ready be and willing,
  To your shy muse you yet must sue—
For ballade-mongering is killing.

Here's stanza three, and now they rile,
  Those end words that of every hue
And form, all seem so poor and vile,
  You, weary of the hackneyed crew,
  This one suggests the other's cue,
As fresh as—twelve pence for a shilling,
  No, never change can you renew,
For ballade-mongering is killing.

ENVOY

Rhymesters! The Envoy you will rue,
  Since it should be supreme and thrilling!
It's ended, tamely it is true,
  For ballade-mongering is killing.

Naturally, Mr. W. E. Henley prefers the villanelle, for he pioneered the way for it in England, though he was not the first to attempt that form of versification:

VILLANELLE

A dainty thing's the Villanelle,
  Sly, musical, a jewel in rhyme,
It serves its purpose passing well.

A double-clappered silver-bell,
  That must be made to clink in chime,
A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

And if you wish to flute a spell,
  Or ask a meeting, neath the lime,
It serves its purpose passing well.

You must not ask of it the swell
  Of organs grandiose and sublime—
A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

And, filled with sweetness, as a shell
  Is filled with sound, and launched in time,
It serves its purpose passing well.

Still fair to see and good to smell
  As in the quaintness of its prime,
A dainty thing's the Villanelle,
It serves its purpose passing well.

As a burlesque, Mr. Walter W. Skeat's recipe for the villanelle may properly find a place in juxtaposition to Mr. Henley's:

VILLANELLE

How to compose a Villanelle, which is said to require an elaborate amount of care in production, which those who read only would hardly suspect existed.

It's all a trick, quite easy when you know it,
  As easy as reciting A B C,
You need not be an atom of a poet.

If you've a grain of wit and want to show it,
  Writing a Villanelle—take this from me—
It's all a trick quite easy when you know it.

You start a pair of "rimes" and then you "go it"
  With rapid running pen and fancy free,
You need not be an atom of a poet.

Take any thought, write round it and below it,
  Above or near it, as it liketh thee;
Its' all a trick, quite easy when you know it.

Pursue your task, till, like a shrub, you grow it,
  Up to the standard size it ought to be;
You need not be an atom of a poet.

Clear it of weeds, and water it, and hoe it,
Then watch it blossom with triumphant glee;
It's all a trick quite easy when you know it,
You need not be an atom of a poet.

Fond as he is of the villanelle, Mr. Henley suggests that easy is the triolet, if you really learn to make it! It is of the triolet that one poet has said: "It is charming—nothing can be more ingeniously mischievous, more playfully sly, than this tiny trill of epigrammatic melody turning so simply upon its own innocent axis."

TRIOLET

Easy is the Triolet,
If you really learn to make it!
Once a neat refrain you get,
Easy is the Triolet,
As you see!—I pay my debt
With another rhyme. Deuce take it,
Easy is the Triolet,
If you really learn to make it.

The rondeau appeals to Mr. Austin Dobson, though he admits that he must await the mood to properly construct one:

IN VAIN TO-DAY

In vain to-day I scrape and blot;
The nimble words, the phrases neat,
Decline to mingle and to meet;
My skill is all foregone, forgot.

He will not canter, walk, or trot,
My Pegasus; I spur, I beat
In vain to-day.

And yet 't were sure the saddest lot
That I should fail to leave complete
One poor . . . the rhyme suggests "conceit!"
Alas! 'tis all too clear I'm not
In vein to-day.

These verses have not been cited as particularly excellent examples of their kind, for that they are not. But they are felicitously descriptive of themselves. With the exception of Mr. Swinburne's roundel, they serve to emphasize the facility with which they can be burlesqued, though there is more of playful phrasing than broad burlesque even here. More descriptive than the words are the structural combinations. It all seems so easy, till one attempts it! For these metrical forms are subject to rigid laws.

In the Royal French library are stored old manuscripts that include many thousands of ballades and rondeaus and virelais. The authorship of some of them is known, while many are by unknown writers. Prof. Saintsbury, in his excellent work on French literature, says that one troubadour has bequeathed to posterity one thousand, one hundred and seventy-five ballades, not to mention a great mass of rondeaus and virelais. "Charles d'Orléans (1391–1466) is especially honored as the master of the roundel, while François Villon (1431–1485) stands out as the prince of all ballade-makers. The first triolet in modern English is ascribed to Robert Bridges. Austin Dobson is credited with the first ballade, Edmund Gosse with the first villanelle and chant royal, while W. E. Henley first essayed the double

ballade and a few other variations. Robert Louis Stevenson, it is said, essayed a few of the Provençal forms of verse, but his published works do not include his attempts, if such there were.

V

It is interesting to note the tremendous output of books that relate to Omar Khayyám. FitzGerald's thin pamphlets in brown paper wrappers found a neglected grave in Quaritch's penny box in 1859. More than thirty years elapsed before the Omar cult began. Indeed, the paraphrases of the Persian tentmaker's quatrains, rendered into English by the recluse of Woodbridge, have had their tremendous vogue—especially in America—less than two decades. In this brief period there have appeared in America alone more than two hundred editions containing FitzGerald's versions, and probably as many more giving the text of other translators. Magazine articles, pamphlets, booklets and books dealing with Omarian philosophy and verse that have come from the press during the same period are numbered by the thousands. A book of fairly formidable proportions comprises a compilation of verse addressed to the poet of Naishapur, and it contains a mere selection of such verse. Thus a few years have sufficed for a single poem to create a literature almost equal in volume to the entire output that all the works of Shakespeare have called into being in nearly two hundred years—up to a century ago.

Much of this literature is controversial. Carlyle, in one of his choleric outbursts, called Omar "that Persian blackguard," and more recently Edgar Saltus has termed the "ruffian heterodoxy of this Persian bon vivant" commonplace, "since it merely decorates the obvious in wine-drenched garlands and tawdry spangles." More flippantly, but less venomously, Thomas Moore has suggested that

> A Persian Heaven is easily made:—
> 'Tis but black eyes and lemonade.

On the other hand, Mr. John Hay, and certain Englishmen of literary tastes belonging to the Parnassian school, have sounded the praises of Omar with as keen a spirit as his detractors have disparaged him.

Now whether the quatrains of the old Persian bear a mystical interpretation or whether his song is merely materialistic, something of its spirit has evidently found a responsive note among thousands of readers. It may be true, as Richard LeGallienne avers, that Omar sometimes made use of wine and women as symbols of his mystical philosophy, and then after the Oriental fashion sought the ideal in the real. Whatever inspired the song of the Tentmaker nine centuries ago, the modern reader hearkens to that note to which his own mind and heart are attuned. With unerring instinct popular estimation has selected, from the thousand rubáiyát credited to old Omar, three or four as apart from the rest in beauty of expression and feeling. And of these, one of them is held above them all:

Here with a Loaf of bread Beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow.

In these four lines is concentrated all that is needful for man's happiness; it is the creed of the democracy of happiness. All else—power, riches, fame—are as but "the rumble of the distant drum."

These four lines of FitzGerald's, more than any other, demonstrate by comparison how feeble has been the effort of those who have attempted to do what he did much better. Franklin once suggested a revision on modern lines of the Book of Job. His specimens have to-day an interest as curiosities merely. A century hence FitzGerald's paraphrases will remain a classic, and the books of the later translators will be known but to the literary antiquarian and book collector. To them the four lines of Omar above quoted will furnish an interesting source of comparison. The genesis thereof may be found in the following literal translation, as rendered by Edward Heron-Allen from the original manuscript:

I desire a flask of ruby wine and a book of verses—
Just enough to keep me alive, and half a loaf is needful,
And then, that thou and I should sit in the wilderness,
Is better than the kingdom of a Sultan.

If a loaf of wheaten bread be forthcoming,
A gourd of wine, and a thigh-bone of mutton
And then, if thou and I be sitting in the wilderness,—
That were a joy not within the power of any Sultan.

McCarthy's rendering in sober prose is about as inanimate as Heron-Allen's, and it has not its merit of literal exactitude:

"Give me a flagon of red wine, a book of verses, a loaf of bread and a little idleness. If with such store I might sit by thy dear side in some lonely place, I should deem myself happier than a king in his kingdom."

Such bleaching bones as these FitzGerald has clothed with living, palpitating flesh. In his lines leaps the passion of Oriental fervor. Compare with his quatrain, for instance, the parallel verse which Miss Elizabeth Alden Curtis has constructed. The atmosphere is at once translated from Iran to New England; the date palm becomes a crabapple tree, and the juice expressed from grapes tastes suspiciously like cider. And yet Miss Curtis has undeniably written some pretty verses. LeGallienne's, too, have an interest all their own. And in the German, von Schack has caught much of the passionate fervor that finds its true expression in the Orient.

If Edward FitzGerald had not so amply shown that "a little thing may be perfect and perfection is not a little thing," perhaps praise would come easier for the many later interpreters of Omar. And this suggests that perhaps the fairest comparison is to be found, not in comment that may after all but reflect individual taste, but in the juxtaposition of the various renderings of this quatrain:

Edward FitzGerald (fourth version):
A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, wilderness were Paradise enow.

Richard LeGallienne:
A Book, a Woman, and a Flask of Wine,
The Three make heaven—for me; it may be thine
Is some sour place of singing cold and bare—
But then, I never said thy heaven was mine.

Elizabeth Alden Curtis:
A roll of verse, a crust of wheaten bread,
Thy voice for music, and my soul is fed;
The ruby of thy crimson lips for wine—
Ah, who would choose a paradise instead?

Charles J. Pickering:
In this world whoso hath but a half a loaf of bread,
And in his breast a refuge where to lay his head,
Who of no man is slave, who of no man is lord—
Tell such to live in joy; his world is sweet indeed.

Michael Kerney:
A flask of red wine, and a volume of song, together—
Half a loaf,—just enough the ravage of Want to tether;
Such is my wish—then, thou in the waste with me—
Oh! sweeter were this than a monarch's crown and feather!

Edward H. Whinfield:
Give me a skin of wine, a crust of bread,
A pittance bare, a book of verse to read;
With thee, O love, to share my lowly roof,
I would not take the sultan's realm instead!

John Leslie Garner:
A Flask of Wine, a book, a Loaf of Bread,—
To every Care and Worldly Sorrow dead,
I covet not, when thou, Oh Love, art near,
The Jeweled Crown upon the Sultan's Head.

H. G. Keene:
A jug of wine, a book of poetry,
For stay of life a crust of bread give me,
And thou beside me, in the wilderness!
The Sultan's Kingdom better cannot be.

Anson:
Thy ruby lips pour fragrance into mine,
Thine eye's deep chalice bids me drink thy soul;
As yonder crystal goblet brims with wine,
So in thy tear the heart's full tide doth roll.

Louisa Stuart Costello:
When a Houri form appears,
Which a vase of ruby bears,
Call me Giaour if then I prize
All the joys of Paradise!

Edward Boyles Cowell:
Some ruby wine and a divan of poems,
A crust of bread to keep the breath in one's body,
And thou and I alone in a desert,—
Were a lot beyond a Sultan's throne.

F. York Powell:
Whether in Heaven or Hell my lot be stay'd,
A Cup, a Lute, a fair and frolic Maid,
Within a place of roses please me now;
While on the chance of Heaven thy life is laid.

VI

So, too, the format and the page in its aspect to the eye must bear relation to the content.

Lo, the sinners are many, and the saintly are but few!

Who can read with pleasure a book of poems unless it be in dainty form, easy to hold, slim as the waist of a maiden, and as a maid, elusive in the shifting moods of its verses. Give one a fat, dumpy volume of poems, and the romance fades out of its pages. Stevenson's Child's Garden of Verses in its dainty Mosher form gives unstinted joy; in its quarto form, illustrated by Jessie Wilcox Smith, it becomes a monstrosity, and it becomes ludicrous in its less bulky but no less inappropriate dress in the style of the Sunbonnet Babies. Even the handsome Thistle edition gives a sense of unfitness.

So it must be with books in other classes of literature—the thought must be clothed appropriately. "I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in folio," Charles Lamb wrote. "The octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them."

"The ideal book, or book beautiful," says T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, "is a composite thing made up of many parts and may be made beautiful by the beauty of each of its parts — its literary content, its material or materials, its writing or printing, its illumination or illustration, its binding and decoration of each of its parts in subordination to the whole

which collectively they constitute; or it may be made beautiful by the supreme beauty of one or more of its parts, all the other parts subordinating or even effacing themselves for the sake of this one or more, and each in turn being capable of playing this supreme part and each in its own peculiar and characteristic way. On the other hand each contributory craft may usurp the functions of the rest and of the whole and, growing beautiful beyond all bounds, ruin for its own the common cause.

"Finally, if the Book Beautiful may be beautiful by virtue of its writing or printing or illustration, it may also be beautiful, be even more beautiful, by the union of all to the production of one composite whole, the consummate Book Beautiful. Here the idea to be communicated by the book comes first, as the thing of supreme importance. Then comes in attendance upon it, striving for the love of the idea to be itself beautiful, the written or printed page, the decorated or decorative letters, the pictures, set amid the text, and finally the binding, holding the whole in its strong grip and for very love again itself becoming beautiful because in company with the idea."

Of the purely intellectual love of books, leading in the end to their purely selfish exploitation, one example may suffice. It is related of Antoine Magliabecchi that "from his earliest years he displayed an inordinate passion for the acquisition of book knowledge. Having mastered the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew languages, he literally buried himself among books, disorderly piles of which

encumbered every portion of his dwelling. In his daily habits he grew to disregard the requirements of social and sanitary life; and such was his avidity of study that he finally denied himself even the requisite intervals of repose. His memory was prodigious. Regarded as the literary prodigy of his times, he was appointed court librarian by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and many tributes of respect were tendered him by royal and distinguished personages. He was intolerant of literary merit in others, was involved in several bitter literary squabbles, and died leaving outside his correspondence no written record of his encyclopedic knowledge."

So we come to the third species of the genus bookworm, the most numerous of all, though at times the most lovable, as fools are fain to be—the bibliomaniac. Indeed, there are fifty-seven times fifty-seven varieties of him. "He was not," wrote Mr. Hill Burton of one of them, "he was not a black-letter man, or a tall copyist, or an uncut man, or a rough-edge man, or an English dramatist, or an Elzevirian, or a broadsider, or a pasquinader, or an old-brown calf man, or a Grangerite, or a tawny moroccoite, or a gilt-topper, or a marbled insider, or an editio princeps man." Mr. Hill Burton's list of nicknames might be extended indefinitely. The bibliomaniac is distinguished by his voracious bibliothecal appetite, which is never satisfied. Modern examples will readily occur to mind. The most conspicuous member of this banderlog tribe was Bishop Heber, a wealthy Englishman who

bought books by tens of thousands. It is related of him that he had a library in his house at Hodnet. His residence in Pimlico, where he died, was filled like Magliabecchi's at Florence, with books from top to bottom; every chair, every passage contained piles of erudition. He had a house in York street, London, filled with books. He had a library at Oxford, one at Antwerp, one at Brussels, one at Ghent. The estimate of his collections places the total at 146,827 volumes, which cost him half a million dollars. After his death the catalogue of his accumulations was published in a series of volumes, and the sales lasted over three years.

In the historic Saints' and Sinners' Corner of a Chicago book store Eugene Field set a scene one Sylvester eve satirizing his bibliomaniac friends. They had gathered to see the old year out. As the hour and minute hands were as one over the XII, the lights were turned out, leaving everyone to witness the succession of years in darkness. There came from the distant gloom, in sepulchral tones, the spoken lines, heard then for the first time, of Field's inimitable poem, "Dibdin's Ghost;"

Dear wife, last midnight while I read
  The tomes you so despise,
A spectre rose beside my bed
  And spoke in this true wise:
"From Canaan's beatific coast
  I've come to visit thee—
For I am Frognall Dibdin's ghost!"
  Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

I bade him welcome, and we twain
  Discussed with buoyant hearts
The various things that appertain
  To bibliomaniac arts.
"Since you are fresh from t'other side,
  Pray tell me of that host
That treasured books before they died,"
  Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

"They've entered into perfect rest,
  For in the life they've won
There are no auctions to molest—
  Nor creditors to dun.
Their heavenly rapture has no bounds
  Beside that jasper sea,
It is a joy unknown to Lowndes,"
  Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

Much I rejoiced to hear him speak
  Of biblio bliss above,
For I am one of those who seek
  What bibliomaniacs love.
"But tell me—for I long to hear
  What interests me most,
Are wives admitted to that sphere?"
  Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

"The womenfolks are few up there,
  For 'twere not fair, you know,
That they our heavenly joy should share
  Who vex us here below!
The few are those who have been kind
  To husbands such as we—
They knew our fads and didn't mind,"
  Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

"But what of those who scolded us
When we would read in bed—
Or, wanting victuals, made a fuss
When we bought books instead?
And what of those who dusted not
Our treasured pride and boast—
Shall they profane that sacred spot?"
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

"O, no! They tread that other path
Which leads where torments roll,
And worms—yea, bookworms, vent their wrath
Upon the guilty soul!
Untouched by bibliomaniacs' grace,
That saveth such as we,
They wallow in that dreadful place!"
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

"To my dear wife will I recite
What things I've heard you say;
She'll let me read the books by night,
She'll let me buy by day;
For we together, by and by,
Would join that heavenly host—
She's earned a rest as well as I,"
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

More clever, if possible, is his prose satire in archaic form, which he called "The Story of Two Friars."

Eugene Field has written most delightfully of himself as an unregenerate bibliomaniac in his "Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac." His brother, Roswell Field, also pictured him, with loving touches, as a bibliomaniac in the readable romance which he called "The Bondage of Ballinger."

In truth, one smiles at the vagaries of the bibliomaniac but cannot avoid the spell of his likeableness. Ian Maclaren has caught a bit from life in his delineation of the dominie in Kate Carnegie:

"Book-shelves had long ago failed to accommodate the Rabbi's treasures, and the floor had been bravely utilized. Islands of books, rugged and perpendicular, rose on every side; long promontories reached out from the shores, varied by bold headlands; and so broken and varied was that floor that the Rabbi was pleased to call it the Ægean Sea, where he had his Lesbos and his Samos. It is absolutely incredible, but it is all the same a simple fact, that he knew every book and its location, having a sense of the feel as well as the shape of his favorites. This was not because he had the faintest approach to orderliness—for he would take down twenty volumes and never restore them to the same place by any chance. It was a sort of motherly instinct by which he watched over them all, even loved prodigals that wandered over all the study and then set off on adventurous journeys into distant rooms. The restoration of an emigrant to his lawful home was celebrated by a feast in which, by a confusion of circumstances, the book played the part of calf, being read afresh from beginning to end."

And it's a clever description that Ian Maclaren introduces as to the removal of the Rabbi's household effects:

"Saunderson's reputation for unfathomable learning and saintly simplicity was built up out of many

incidents, and grew with the lapse of years to a solitary height in the big strath, so that no man would have dared to smile had the Free Kirk minister of Kilbogie appeared in Muirtown in his shirt sleeves, and Kilbogie would only have been a trifle more conceited. Truly he was an amazing man. The arrival of his goods was more than many sermons to Kilbogie. Mr. Saunderson was at the station, having reached it by some miracle without mistake, and was in a condition of abject nervousness about the handling and conveyance of his belongings. 'You will be careful—exceeding careful,' he implored; 'if one of the boxes were allowed to descend hurriedly to the ground, the result to what is within would be disastrous. I am much afraid that the weight is considerable, but I am ready to assist;' and he got ready.

"'Dod, man,' remarked Mains to the station-master, examining a truck with eight boxes; 'the manse'll no want for dishes at ony rate; but let's start on the furniture; whar hae ye got the rest o' the plenishing?

"'Naething mair? havers, man, ye dinna mean tae say they pack beds an' tables in boxes; a' doot there's a truck missin'.' Then Mains went over where the minister was fidgeting beside his possessions.

"'No, no,' said Saunderson, when the situation was put before him, 'it's all here. I counted the boxes, and I packed every box myself. That top one contains the fathers—deal gently with it; and

the Reformation divines are just below it. Books are easily injured, and they feel it. I do believe there is a certain life in them, and—and—they don't like being ill-used,' and Jeremiah looked wistfully at the ploughmen.

"'Div ye mean tae say,' as soon as Mains had recovered, 'that ye've brocht naethin' for the manse but bukes, naither bed nor bedding? Keep's a',' as the situation grew upon him, 'whar are ye tae sleep, and what are ye to sit on? An' div ye never eat? This croons a';' and Mains gazed at his new minister as one who supposed that he had taken Jeremiah's measure and had failed utterly.

"Mrs. Pitillo took the minister into her hands, and compelled him to accompany her to Muirtown, where she had him at her will for some time, so that she equipped the kitchen (fully), a dining-room (fairly), a spare bedroom (amply), Mr. Saunderson's own bedroom (miserably), and secured a table and two chairs for the study. He explained to Mrs. Pitillo that every inch of space must be rigidly kept for the overflow from the study, which he expected—if he were spared—would reach the garrets.

"We were not able at all times to see eye to eye, as she had an unfortunate tendency to meddle with my books and papers, and to arrange them after an artificial fashion. This she called tidying, and, in its most extreme form, cleaning.

"'With all her excellencies, there was also in her what I have noticed in most women, a certain flavor of guile, and on one occasion, when I was making a

brief journey through Holland and France in search of comely editions of the fathers, she had the books carried out to the garden and dusted. It was the space of two years before I regained mastery of my library again, and unto this day I cannot lay my hands on the service book of King Henry VIII, which I had in the second edition, to say nothing of an original edition of Rutherford's Lex Rex.

"'It does not become me, however, to reflect on the efforts of that worthy matron, for she was by nature a good woman, and if anyone could be saved by good works, her place is assured. I was with her before she died, and her last words to me were, "Tell Jean tae dust yir bukes aince in the sax months, and for ony sake keep ae chair for sittin' on." It was not the testimony one would have desired in the circumstances, but yet, Mr. Carmichael, I have often thought that there was a spirit of . . . unselfishness, in fact, that showed the working of grace.'"

For all time, perhaps, the prototype of the perfect bibliophile will be associated with the personality of Charles Lamb. He loved books, and he knew books. He loved their material forms, and he loved the souls of them. They brought to him such joy and solace as he knew of life, and he gave back manifold to thousands, in the books he wrote, the joy and solace that books had given him. In his whimsical fashion he tells in the essay "Detached thoughts on books and reading:" "I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time

to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me. I have no repugnances, Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call *a book*."

There are things in that shape, he adds, which he cannot allow for such, and he names in this catalogue of books which are no books: . . . Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards, bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, Statutes at Large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, and generally, all those volumes which no gentleman's library should be without.

"With these exceptions," he adds, "I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding. I confess that it moves my spleen to see these things in books' clothing perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what 'seems its leaves,' to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of blockheaded Encyclopedias (Anglicans or Metropolitans) set out in an array of Russia, or morocco, when a tithe of that good

leather would comfortably reclothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils."

And Charles Lamb knew his books well, and he loved them well. He had, too, the courage of his convictions.

"Shall I be thought fantastical," he asks, "if I confess, that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine, at least—than that of Milton or of Shakespeare? It may be, that the latter are more staled and rung upon in common discourse. The sweetest names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are, Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley.

"Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In five or six impatient minutes before dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the Faerie Queene for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' Sermons?

"Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears. Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakespeare enters. At such a season, the Tempest, or his own Winter's Tale—"

How well Lamb expressed the unspoken feelings

of many a bibliophile, poor in purse but rich in a few shelves of books, when he wrote in reminiscent mood:

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare, and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night, from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how you eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be late—and when the old bookseller, with some grumbling, opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (collating, you called it), and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break, was there no pleasure in being a poor man?"

It is well to know many books even though slightly, but it is better to know a few intimately well. There was Tam Fleck at Peebles in Scotland of whom William Chambers tells in his fascinating autobiography. He went about from house to house with a translation of Josephus.

"Weel, Tam, what's the news the nicht?" one